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BEHIND THE SCENES.

NOTWITHSTANDING the acknowledged fact, that acting is difficult, arduous, and, as a general rule, ill-paid; notwithstanding, too, that parents and guardians strenuously oppose the inclinations of their children and wards towards the theatrical profession, its ranks are constantly recruited from the youth of both sexes in the middle and lower classes of society: individuals in a higher sphere, to whom time and money are not so precious, generally give vent to their histrionic ardour by appearing in amateur performances. Suppose a young person to have 'taken a fancy,' as it is called, to the stage, and to be desirous of putting his abilities to the test of public opinion, the first consideration is to obtain an introduction to some one qualified to further his views; and this is frequently gained by the aspirant's replying to one of the numerous advertisements of professors who 'continue to prepare pupils for the stage, on moderate terms, and insure a *début* for them when competent.' There are theatrical agents in London and in some of the principal towns in the provinces, who procure engagements, and to them the tyro naturally applies, if not in a position to pay for previous instruction. For a fee, varying in different offices from one to five shillings, his name is put on the books, where it may remain perhaps for a year, without any satisfactory result; or it may happen that a situation may be obtained immediately.

Many professionals keep their names permanently on an agent's list, pay an annual booking-fee, and usually succeed in getting the first chance when a vacancy occurs in their particular line of business, their agent often making more advantageous terms for them than they could for themselves; at least he will endeavour to secure as high a figure as possible, because he charges a third or a fourth of a week's salary for his services in negotiating the business. If the party wishing for an engagement does not think proper to employ an agent, he responds to the managerial advertisements that appear in the *Era* newspaper, some-

times enclosing his *carte de visite*, especially if he be handsome. Should the manager's answer be favourable, he forwards to the applicant two printed forms, with names and date filled up in writing: one of these the actor signs, and returns to his employer, the other he keeps. The forms are worded thus: 'Memorandum of Agreement between Mr Blank and Mr Dash—Witnesseth, that the said Blank agrees to engage the said Dash at the weekly salary of — pounds, — shillings, for his services at the Theatre-royal, —, or elsewhere; the said Dash agreeing to enact the line of characters usually denominated —, and also to abide by the rules and regulations of the establishment, and to pay all fines justly demanded. The engagement to commence on —, and to be terminable by a written notice of two' [four or six] 'weeks from any Saturday by either of the above-named parties.'

(Signatures.)

It is customary for the *corps dramatique* to assemble on the stage at an appointed hour, a few days before the date of opening, in order that the first night's pieces may have several rehearsals, to insure their going smoothly; for the time thus occupied, half-salary is sometimes paid, but more frequently there is no recompense given. When the performer receives his first week's 'reward of merit,' the treasurer requests him to sign the 'rules,' of which the following list is a fair sample: '1. Every member of the company required to assist in the National Anthem; also to give their services for the music of *Macbeth*, masquerade and dirge of *Romeo and Juliet*, music of *Pizarro*, &c. 2. Ten minutes allowed for change of dress. 3. Ten minutes' grace allowed for difference of clocks, for the first rehearsal only. 4. No performer allowed in front of the house before or after performing the same evening. 5. Any member of the company going on the stage, either at rehearsal or at night, in a state of intoxication, to forfeit one week's salary, or to receive immediate dismissal, at the option of the manager. 6. For addressing the audience without the sanction of the management, to forfeit five shillings.' [In some theatres, this is a guinea forfeit.] '7. For using bad language, or being

guilty of violent conduct, one guinea. 8. For neglecting stage-business, as arranged by the stage-manager at rehearsal, five shillings. 9. For being absent at rehearsal—for the first scene, one shilling; for every succeeding scene, sixpence. 10. For crossing the stage during performance, five shillings. 11. For loud speaking at the wings and entrances during business, two shillings. 12. For being imperfect at night, sufficient time having been allowed for study, five shillings. 13. For refusing to play any part, such character being in accordance with the terms of engagement, one guinea. 14. For keeping the stage waiting, two-and-sixpence. 15. For detaining prompt-book beyond the time arranged by stage-manager, two shillings. 16. On benefit occasions, pieces selected to be submitted for the approval of the management before issuing bills or announcements.

Then follow the regulations to be observed by the orchestra, the carpenter, and the property-man. The above are rather sensible rules. I have met with some much more stringent, and with others that were downright arbitrary. Here follows the only humorous one I ever read: 'Rule 12.—Actors are requested not to grumble and stay, but to grumble and go!' It was said recently, before the 'Government Committee upon Theatrical Licenses,' that actors now insist on a higher rate of payment than they used to demand; a fact which is easily accounted for when we take into consideration that their expenses are, at least, double what they amounted to in the time of Manager Smallday, who gave his people sixteen shillings per head weekly, irrespective of the rank each held in the corps; yet an actor was really better off then than he is to-day with twice that sum. The Smalldayan journeys were short; there were no vacations (now, it is the custom to close during the worst-paying portions of the year); a season lasted only five or six weeks, and the performers were entitled to a benefit in every season, by the profits from which, added to the presents then usual on such occasions, they realised a comfortable income. (Benefits are now the most uncertain of speculations.) The work was light, too; the same old plays, dramas, and farces being repeated year after year, and the theatres being open but three, or at most, four nights a week; this arrangement affording the performers time and opportunity to make acquaintance with the townsfolk, and to be not unfrequently partakers of their hospitality. (Theatres are now open six nights a week, and the work is heavy. Lodgings and provisions are a great deal dearer than formerly—groceries alone excepted.)

Fifty or sixty years ago, there was, in every county in England, just such a pleasant, easy-going circuit as Smallday's, of minor towns, where the same steady, respectable company was retained for a whole generation. Now a days, a professional is expected not to falter or hesitate at having to undertake three or four flying journeys in the course of a twelvemonth, each one of which costs him as much as a removal every five weeks would have done formerly (in a circuit) by the carriers' vans, which, although slow, were safe and commodious—not to mention the charge incurred for extra luggage, inevitable at the present period, when theatrical folks are expected to dress well in private life, to appear in the height (and width) of the fashion, in modern plays; in the choicest of character-costumes, in foreign pieces; and to possess a variety of expensive properties never dreamed

of in former days, even by the most exigent of managers.

With respect to wardrobe, ladies (in the provinces, at least) have to find everything for themselves; gentlemen are only required to have modern dresses of their own, and properties—namely, boots, tights, hats, feathers, wigs, canes, swords, buckles, &c.—though many, who are particular as to fit, prefer dressing themselves, even when the stock wardrobe is large and various. Only a few years since, three or four of the principal towns in a county formed a pleasant circuit. Take, for instance, York, Leeds, and Hull, where salaries were good and certain all the year round, save in Passion-week, when the theatres were closed. Different managers now take these establishments, and open them only in the winter. When the writer of this paper was a member of the troupe acting in that circuit, there were many comforts attached to the situation that have since been abolished: there were dressers and call-boy, and properties supposed to be eatable and drinkable were fit to be swallowed. I have sat down to an excellent supper in *High Life Below Stairs*; as Oliver Twist, I have enjoyed my ham-sandwiches and bottled porter; as Paul, in the *Wandering Boys*, have partaken of a savoury real-pie; as a Fairy at the christening feast of a beautiful princess (afterwards the Sleeping Beauty in the Wood), have eaten heartily (pleasant, but not characteristic, I admit) of a grand cold collation, whereat figured fowls, tongue, tartlets, jellies, ices, tipsy-cake, choice fruits, and champagne. This spread was a treat given by the manager on his birthday, and, of course, was not 'a thing of custom.' Those days are gone, Floranthe! More recently, I have, in the same establishments, made one of the party at horrid Barnecide banquets, where pasteboard fruits, wooden cakes, hams of calico, with saw-dust stuffing, and decanters of cold tea, furnished a repast non-edible and non-potable.

The visitors in *High Life Below Stairs* have, of late, been regaled with fowls, cut by grimy hands, out of a small loaf, and browned at the fire; poor 'Work'us' now feeds on stale bread, and pretends to drink out of an empty stone-bottle; Paul and his brother are treated to a pie-dish, with a cover of brown paper glued on to the edge, and painted to resemble a rich crust; Mrs Hector Sternhold makes breakfast with a 'ha'p'orth of bread,' cut thin, and sweetens the cold, weak tea with small lumps of turnip; and Belphegor's soup is a slender decoction of coffee, without milk and sugar. As for birthdays, managers do not seem to have any. I suppose people never are contented, for, at the very time of which I speak as being so agreeable, actors who had been previously in the circuit, were prone to pull long faces, shake their heads, and grumble at the change for the worse that had taken place since 'Old Up's' time, when there was a copyist employed by the management to write out all parts in new pieces; when a perruquier attended every evening to dress the ladies' and gentlemen's hair, or wigs, and perfume their handkerchiefs; when there was an allowance of one shilling made for a 'clean-shirt' part—that is, where the coat has to be taken off on the stage; when a quart of ale and a bonus of five shillings were given to any person enacting a part wherein the face had to be blackened or coloured; and when the worthy manager made a point of giving a splendid feast on Christmas-day to every creature in his establishment.

No one who does not possess a retentive memory should think of 'taking to the stage:' at the present day, so many new pieces are brought out, that the study of them is a severe tax on the mental powers; and studied they must be, more especially melodramas, which are difficult to retain, inasmuch as their language is usually rubbish, and plentifully interlarded with music cues, which are far more important than cues for speeches. If you do not give the exact words of the author or adapter (or pillager, as the case may be), your brother-actors, being liable to depend on you in their turn to help them out, may, and probably will, go on; but your musicians, never. So, for want of the precise cue, they omit the chord, or hurry, or march, or dance required, and the drama in hand gets into wild, and sometimes inextricable confusion.

If love of the histrionic art, or a keen appreciation of the weekly reward of merit thereto pertaining, be not a sufficient stimulus to professional exertion, in these days of testimonialising, the tyro, if careful, may comfort himself with the hope of receiving a flattering tribute in the shape of cup, or watch, or ring, since even the lowest actors are not beneath such acknowledgment of their merit, as witness this paragraph in a newspaper of recent date: 'PRESENTATION TO A DONKEY.—On Monday last, Mr W. H. Payne, the Pantomimist, presented to the *Fore and Hind Legs of his Donkey* two handsome silver medals, for their strict attention to his training and instruction. The medals were manufactured by Messrs Loewenstark and Sons, masonic jewellers, of Garrick Street, and bore the following inscription: "Presented by W. H. Payne, of the Theatre-royal, Covent Garden, to Master William Allcroft and Master John Mapstone, in remembrance of his donkey, Ali Baba, 1866 and 1867." They were received by the Legs with kicks of delight and rapture.'

The writer's earnest advice to beginners is, first to get perfect in the words and business of a part, and when that is achieved, to turn their attention to their dress, and to appear as nearly in the proper habit of the assumed character as the means at their command will allow.

Many ladies and gentlemen who ought to know better, if they can but attire themselves to their satisfaction, throw all other considerations into the background—a lamentable mistake that, as although dress has a certain influence with the British public, it never yet was known to drag an actor through a part; and it must be extremely galling to a bad and imperfect performer to have a warm reception given him entirely on that score, as it sometimes happens, and to hear the gods shout heartily: 'Bravo the dress!' One should try to hit the happy medium in this respect, and to pay due regard to propriety of costume, without neglecting other essentials. The style and cut of a stage garment are of more consequence than the quality or nature of the material of which it is composed, and the correct dress of the period certainly enhances the beauty of a play; yet, in the *School for Scandal* and other elegant comedies of the same date, the gentlemen generally sport moustaches; and a 'star' appears in *Guy Rannering* without previously shaving off his whiskers and imperial! But carelessness in these and other such instances is not half so censurable as the downright ignorance that is occasionally to be met with in the profession. It is often asserted that the pulpit, the bar, and the stage are the three recognised schools of reading

and elocution; but the last, I fear, cannot always be relied on. Not in a booth at a fair, not in a trumpery tin-pot fit-up in a barn, but in as large and as handsome a theatre as any in Yorkshire, I have heard a Constance (who was in receipt of a high salary, too) read 'ennity' instead of 'amity' twice in the course of a few lines; thus converting a noble speech of Shakspeare's into absolute nonsense. The same individual, when representing a fashionable young widow, talked to her dancing-master about the 'votaries of Terpsichoor' (*ch soft*). Another lady, rejoicing in the heavy business, ejaculated: 'Candid, ingenious Rolla!' her intention being to praise the Peruvian leader's strict adherence to truth. As a fair aristocrat, this same genius complained that she had been *incarcerated* in a loathsome dungeon, and *arranged* at the bar of justice.

With regret, and my mouth muffled in a handkerchief, to stifle my laughter, I have listened to a wealthy and supposed-to-be-highly-educated baroness, expatiating on 'the *unscreevable* ways of destiny,' and bewailing the terrible *fatality* that had overtaken her ancient house, her lord having deserted her in a *paroxysm* of rage, and left her senseless (that perhaps might account for her stupidity), and in a state of *comol(a)*.

I shall conclude this brief article by unfolding a small bundle of true professional anecdotes, that I hope may provoke the reader to smile.

I had not been many months on the stage, and was playing the young and lovely walking-ladies, when, by a mistake of the printer, my name appeared in the bills for the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. Our old lady was indignant thereat, and refused to go on for the part; and so the manager coaxed me to try and do my best with it, rather than that we should change the play. Of course, I could not have studied it, if I had endeavoured to do so, after one o'clock in the day, and being informed that I was at liberty to cut it, I did so with a vengeance, reducing the first long speech to two lines:

Even or odd, of all days in the year,
And pretty fool, it stinted and said 'Aye.'

The only other instance that I recollect of such an atrocious mutilation of 'the divine Williams' occurred at Bury. A star came to personate Shylock; the stage-carpenter, who sometimes acted, was requested to go on for the Duke, which had inadvertently been omitted in the cast, and to make the task easier, the star good-naturedly observed: 'Mr Blunt, you can cut the Duke if you like; *judiciously*, you know.' Of this privilege, the carpenter availed himself to such an extent that, at night, the famous magisterial expostulatory address to the inexorable creditor was thus compressed:

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too.
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

One night, in *Hamlet*, which we had been acting exceedingly well, and with great applause, to a crowded house, we were about to bury poor Ophelia. Four stalwart supernumeraries brought the coffin in on their shoulders, but being completely enveloped in the thick pall, they could not see their way to the grave, but pulled, one, one way, one another, trod on the Queen of Denmark's green silk velvet train, upset the little attendant page with his basket of flowers, capsized priest and book into the grave, and altogether 'wobbled' about so confusedly, that the gravedigger (who was also our

manager), in a rage, kicked them off the stage *en masse*, coffin and all, telling them, loud enough for everybody to hear, to 'go to the devil!' a proceeding that reduced the rest of the tragedy to pantomime. The 'digger' would, no doubt, have obviated all difficulty by removing the pall, if he had not been conscious of the supers being in their work-a-day corduroys and muddy highlows, and of the coffin being nothing more or less than a board, narrowed at the ends.

Sometimes, by stratagem, dishonest managers, 'who can pay, and won't pay,' are 'made to pay.' Here is an instance. We were in a genteel town in Scotland—business good, expenses light; yet the salaries were not forthcoming. Our low comedian, who was of a rather eccentric turn, resolved to make an effort to better his condition; so, one fine sunny afternoon, when all the world and his wife were astir, he dressed himself in a vile suit of rags, *à la* Wandering Minstrel, and walked several times before the manager's lodgings, politely taking off his brimless castor, and bowing to that gentleman's better-half, as she sat at the open window occupied with her embroidery. He was quickly beckoned in, and remonstrated with: 'He would disgrace the corps in the eyes of the townfolk'—'he would ruin the season,' &c. But he was deaf to argument, and coolly told his employer that he 'had an oath in heaven' never to 'wear his good clothes when his pay ran short, and there was no probability of replacing them as they got shabby,' and that he had no intention, in the present case, of 'laying perjury upon his soul.' The pleasing result of his conduct was, that he and the rest of the company were paid up that very evening, and that thenceforward the ghost walked regularly on Saturdays, until the close of our theatrical campaign.

Soldiers generally make good supers, being very careful to obey instructions—too careful sometimes. Once, in Hull, we had a nervous, uneasy Miles Bertram, who had twelve of these military auxiliaries assigned him for his smuggler crew. In his anxiety for the last scene to go right, he charged the men, over and over again, 'to stick by him,' 'to watch his actions,' and 'to do as he did.' These orders they faithfully carried out by rushing on with him at the end when he was shot, and dying (without any motive) when he did; the whole dozen noisily ranging themselves alongside of him in a row across the stage, with their feet towards the audience, in spite of poor Miles's 'curses, not loud, but deep.'

Very far north of the Tweed, we were treating the lieges to the *Rose of Ettrick Vale*, when one of the bridesmaids, who had to speak of 'warlocks, and witches, and water-kelpies,' failed to recollect the latter, it being a term that, perhaps, she had never met with before, and set us all laughing by substituting for it the word *kangaroos*!

Once, an amateur volunteered to play Richmond for us; he was lame, having one leg shorter than the other. He began his opening speech: 'Thus far into the bowels of the land have I marched on without impediment;' when a rude, unfeeling fellow interrupted him with: '*Hopped* on, you mean;' whereon, with a polite bow, Richmond replied: 'Thank you, sir; I *hop* corrected;' and proceeded with the performance.

Our Duke Aranza, at Darlington, had begun that sentence of Tobin's, which never fails to elicit cheers from the gallery—'No, I'll not beat you: the man

who lays his hand upon a woman, save in the way of kindness, is a wretch, whom 'twere gross flattery to call a coward;' when it suddenly occurred to him that the actors were all aware of his having thrashed his wife (who was the Juliana) that same afternoon. With some presence of mind, he varied the text thus: 'The man who lays his hand upon a woman, *except when she deserves it*,' &c.

At Cork, a gentleman had often brought his little son to see the play. Thinking the boy was getting old enough to attend the service at church, he took him there one Sunday. Patiently enough the child sat for a time; but fancying, I suppose, that it was time the amusements began, he commenced clapping his hands, and horrified his father by shouting with all his might at the top of his tiny shrill voice: 'Up wid the rag!' (the usual cry in the Cork theatres when an audience consider it time for the curtain to rise).

At Lanark, we were representing the *Heart of Midlothian*. The two or three Scotchmen that were in the company were cast for Dumbiedikes, Saddletree, &c.; and David Deans was allotted to our first old man, a thorough Cockney born and bred. No sooner did he begin to scold his daughters for talking of 'dances,' than there was a slight murmur of disapprobation from the gallery, and a 'native' bawled out: 'Hech, mon, yer no a bit like Dawvie Deans: whar's yer awcent?' To which unkind interrogation, David testily replied: 'Why, *you've* got it'—a repartee that was taken in good part; and the old man's really capital acting (*sans* the accent) gaining him a call at the close of the drama.

MARRIED WELL.

IN NINETEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER X.—COME WHERE MY LOVE LIES DREAMING.

MRS PLATT could not stay to dinner at the Grimshaws', and so Nelly's first evening was a great trial. She made progress with Mr Grimshaw, but in the same proportion she fell out of Mrs Grimshaw's good graces. Mrs Grimshaw had been in the habit of reading the *Times* every evening to her spouse: she didn't like it; but still, when Nelly had volunteered to take her place, and had read so fluently, and musically, and distinctly that old Grimshaw expressed his delight, and his determination never to listen to anybody else's reading, if he could help it, Mrs Grimshaw felt towards Nelly a pang of envy which is akin to hatred, which takes very nasty forms with women. However, Nelly retired to rest unconscious of her offence. She pondered a while before she got into bed; she let fall a few tears as she thought of old times and old friends, amongst whom George Ewart was conspicuous; and she took from her dressing-case a short note, which ran—'One whom circumstances will not allow to utter all he feels, begs Miss Finch to accept the tribute of his heartfelt sympathy. More he knows he ought not to say; but he trusts Miss Finch will bear with him if he prays her to read the motto on the seal of this note, and to believe that the words will describe the writer.

J. F.'

The motto was *Semper idem*, which Nelly had learned meant 'Always the same.'

'Poor fellow!' she sighed, as she replaced the note; 'and a week afterwards he had left England.' Then she lay down to sleep, and dreamed of the night of that fatal fire. She went through every incident that had happened, and once more she held with Fortress the conversation of which Ewart had heard the conclusion; and this was the fashion of it.

Fortress. I leave England in a few days, Miss Finch, to join my regiment.

Nelly. Ah! you were telling me something about that the other night, when—when—

Fortress. When you refused to hear me out, and said you thought I must have been acting charades until the dialogue crept into my ordinary conversation.

Nelly. Oh, pray forgive me; I know I was rude; but—but—

Fortress. But you would not listen to me. Will you listen now?

Nelly (earnestly). It would be better not, Mr Fortress—it would indeed.

Fortress. If you will only listen, I will take my chance. Indeed, I must speak, for my future depends upon it. You have eyes, and must have seen that I love you, but it is necessary you should hear with your ears that it is so.—And now that you have heard, will you have pity? Will you say you do not reject my love? Will you share the fortunes of a poor subaltern? Will you go with me to India? or at least send me out with the certainty that some day I may call you my darling wife?

Nelly (lifting her head, which had been buried in her hands). Mr Fortress, you can see how distressed I am, and I told you it would be better not to speak.

Fortress. There are times when a man *must* speak, and I have spoken. It is true I am only a poor subaltern, but I have some private means; and in India—

Nelly. Pray, pray, Mr Fortress, do not talk in that strain. I feel that in all respects, as the world generally thinks, you do too much honour to a poor girl like me; but—

Fortress. I am personally hateful to you.

Nelly. Oh, no, no, no. You have many gifts, which every girl must appreciate, and to which it would not become me to allude more particularly; you have many qualities which I rate very, very highly; you are generous, I know; you are brave, I have heard; but I have also heard— Oh, pray excuse me, Mr Fortress—I cannot go on.

Fortress (ironically). Having, from knowledge or hearsay, enumerated my merits, you really ought, Miss Finch, in justification of my treatment at your hands, to mention some at least of my defects. May I press you for a short list?

Nelly. If you really wish it, I will ask you some plain questions, and you will, I need not fear, answer them like the frank, truthful gentleman you are known to be.

Fortress. Pray, commence, Miss Finch: I am on my honour, which is binding as an oath.

Nelly. Are you a gambler?

Fortress. Yes; that is to say, I have lost a great deal of money by gambling; and I still occasionally gamble.

Nelly. Are you an infidel?

Fortress. No; but I am bound to admit I have given some grounds for the accusation.

Nelly. Were you expelled from college?

Fortress (sadly). Yes. That is, I was sent away for a time, and never went back.

Nelly. Will you tell me what for?

Fortress (gloomily). Miss Finch, I could not; it would not be right that you should hear.

Nelly (flushing). You mean that you dare not, considering my sex and youth, allude to the subject?

Fortress. So much I acknowledge; but I assure you, nevertheless, that you labour under a mistake. (She had this story from a woman, that's quite clear, thought he.)

Nelly. Enough, Mr Fortress; you have replied to my questions as straightforwardly as I knew you would. And now, oh, forgive me when I say that I could not trust my happiness with one who is or has been a gambler, is not unjustly termed an infidel, was expelled from his college, and cannot, without a breach of the respect due to a lady, tell me why. Besides—excuse me if I appear to put a slight on a noble profession—I admire but dread the army.

Fortress (sarcastically). Perhaps you prefer the church?

Nelly (sententiously). Perhaps.

Fortress (ironically). Men do leave the army, and take orders. Would you think better of me if I did?

Nelly (pale but calm). No; I could not think better of you than I do. I could never give you any other answer than I have given you already.

Fortress. Never? Could you never marry me?

Nelly. Never.

Fortress. Then to-night I must say good-bye for ever; and may God bless you—and—and me.

So Nelly slept, and dreamed, and started up at the sight (as it seemed) of Wadsworth House in flames; but it was the glorious sun streaming through the window of her little room in her new home at the Grimshaws'. In a few minutes, she realised everything; and with a sigh and a shudder, she rose up to dress; and an unspoken question haunted her as she dressed: 'When would she see George Ewart again?' He had not been to the Platts' for some time before she left; he had made a very good bargain (as he told his college-friends) for a living (the holder of which had nearly nine toes in the grave); and he had commenced the 'fling' he had considered advisable for a young man who would soon have to war with others against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

Of all this, Nelly of course knew and guessed nothing.

The night had not been passed by the Grimshaws without speech. Avarice, from beneath a tasselled night-cap, had said: 'She's very cheap at twenty pounds a year; and a voice from the recesses of a frilled night-cap had echoed: 'At twenty pounds a year.' Then the first voice had muttered: 'But she's as likely as not to marry well;' and the second voice had echoed 'well' with an interrogative

tone, which seemed to imply that the echo would willingly have added: 'What if she does?' Whereupon there was a short silence, succeeded by stertorous noises from beneath the tasselled night-cap, promptly echoed from the recesses of the frilled night-cap.

ALIENS.

By the word 'alien' was formerly meant any one who was not a natural subject of the state. The word has gone into disuse very much, people now a days preferring to use the word foreigner, which seems to have a sound less harsh. Alien is now taken to mean not merely a person of another nationality to our own, but also one who has by misconduct or other causes estranged himself from those of his own kith and kin. It cannot be offensive to a Frenchman to speak of him as such, for that is to give him 'a local habitation and a name' in which he prides himself; but to speak of the same man as 'a foreigner' in general terms, implies, if not reproach, at least some discourtesy. If the word alien, however, were to be substituted for foreigner, it could hardly be supposed but that an insult was intended. Time was when there was considerable indifference whether a foreigner were insulted or not—indeed, it would be more correct to say, at least of certain periods, that to insult him would have been looked on as a merit. It was in such times that the word alien was first introduced into our language as descriptive of foreign-born persons.

To this day there are certain distinctions, more or less invidious, between the rights of British subjects and those of foreigners resident and domiciled within the kingdom; but they do not amount to much after all, and certainly they are as nothing compared to the restraints and vexations which were imposed upon foreign residents by Plantagenet and Tudor kings. In speaking of aliens it is not meant here to include Jews. Of course, they were under the yoke wherever they dared to exist, and though it is possible they were on the whole treated a trifle better in this country than on the Continent, it must be frankly admitted that, what with rough tooth-drawing, frizzlings in oil, occasional massacres, wholesale confiscations, and Edward III.'s famous edict of banishment, 'and all for use of that which was their own,' they had a shockingly bad time of it. Weak in an age when might was right, without a country to whose government they could appeal for redress, and exciting by their very thrift and industry the cupidity of those who had the power to oppress them, they were given over to the fate of the helpless, and were wronged and pillaged without hope of satisfaction, and with the certainty of punishment, dire and cruel, if they ventured to attempt reprisals.

The aliens with whom we are now concerned were non-English Europeans, and such few Asiatics and Africans as were tempted by trade or curiosity to dwell among us. The regulations made for their treatment were many and various in their character. The first order on the subject was one of Henry III.'s, which, in the interest of commerce, declared that merchant-strangers should have leave to come and go, and to trade on the same footing as English merchants; 'and if they be of a land at war against us, and if such be found in our land at the beginning

of the war, they shall be attached without harm of body or goods until it be known unto us or our chief-justice how the merchants of our land be entreated.' Edward I. gave to aliens a remedy against the lands of their debtors; and Edward II., as might have been expected in a prince so much given to the company of foreigners, granted them other privileges, which had rather the effect of rousing jealousy in the minds of the English, than of satisfying the foreigners, who still craved for more.

The treatment of alien merchants now became a question between the jealousy of the English on the one side, and the advantageous attraction of foreign wealth and foreign industry to England on the other. Unless safety could be insured to life and property, it could not of course be expected that foreigners would consent to come over and settle, however great the reward for their labour might be. But this was not all that was involved. The *lex talionis* is the only law by which, especially in half-barbarous times, the treatment of the subjects of one country by the government of another can be regulated; and it was a matter of the highest importance to English merchants residing abroad, and to English sailors in all parts of the then known world, that foreigners should be well cared for and protected in England. The English government, in the interests of its subjects abroad, and in the interests of commerce, which early occupied the industry and the money of this country, strove to extend to aliens the same rights and privileges as were enjoyed by its own people. The chief difficulties it had to contend with were the greediness and the protectionist instincts of the English themselves, who could not bear the idea of aliens coming among them and growing rich on the trades and manufactures which they considered to be peculiarly their own. Of course, this consideration was perfectly erroneous, for the sort of foreign trade which the aliens brought would not have come to England but by their hands. Some excuse might be made for the jealousy of the English, who, under Edward II. and Richard II., saw the sovereign's affection and posts of honour and emolument given almost wholly to strangers, while the English were looked upon and treated as the mere means by which the foreigners could live; but when this jealousy became chronic, and remained after the cessation of the causes which gave rise to it, it became a nuisance to trade and a national injury.

Edward III. and Richard II. passed many statutes which aimed at encouraging aliens to engage in English commerce. By a law of the former king, an act of justice was done to aliens, who seem before that time to have been answerable for the faults of their fellows, though they might have been powerless to control or to affect them in any way. The new law declared that merchant-strangers should not be 'impleaded for another's trespass, unless in the way of suretyship; but it provided for reprisals in case any of our liege people, merchants or otherwise, be indamaged by any lords of strange lands or their subjects, and the said lords (duly required) fail of right to our said people; in which case, 'we shall have the law of marque as hath been used in times past, without fraud or deceit.' A most important order, considering the frequency of war, was also made to the effect, that after proclamation of war against a state, the people belonging thereto and resident in

England should have six weeks in which to sell their goods and get out of the country.

The parliament of Richard II., which agreed that alien merchants should be well treated in order that they might have the 'greater courage to repair' to England, also passed a law to compel them to spend half the money they received for their goods on English commodities, a law which it is needless to say was constantly evaded. The disgust inspired by Richard's predilection for strangers produced the oppressive regulation of Henry IV., by which alien merchants were compelled to sell their wares within three months, to spend the money they earned upon the commodities of the kingdom, and to dwell only with appointed hosts, who were to be answerable for them both in their personal and commercial conduct. There may have been necessity in the circumstances which attended the anti-French policy of Henry V., for the statute made in his reign, by which the above orders of Henry IV., which were rescinded the year after they were made, were confirmed, with this addition, that hosts were ordered to be appointed at all ports or towns in which aliens dwelt. These regulations, coupled with the natural tendency of men of the same nation to congregate in a strange country, led to the institution of foreign guilds, and to the settlement of foreigners in particular localities of towns. The Hanse merchants in London, known as the *Almaïne* merchants, had their Guildhall in Thames Street, by Cosin Lane; and, as a *dépot* for grain, cables, ropes, masts, pitch, flax, linen, wax, and steel—the commodities in which they chiefly dealt—the Steelyard in Dowgate. The Cologne merchants, and the merchants of Amiens and Nesle, had their particular quarter, the Genoese community was in Mincheon Lane (Mincing Lane), and the Bordeaux merchants had their head place in Vintry Ward. In the time of Edward III., when many weavers from the Low Countries settled in England, the custom was for the Flemings to go for hire to the church of St Lawrence, Poutney, and for the men of Brabant to go to the Church of St Mary, Mountenhaut. The foreign guilds had charters and grants of incorporation, by which—generally in return for a sum of money—the king granted them certain privileges and immunities. A differential duty in favour of the English consumer was charged on coals, and on certain English manufactured goods sold to foreigners, and various other minor disadvantages were imposed on the aliens; but in the eighth year of Henry VI., a just concession was made to them, which remains in force till this day. It was found that in the criminal courts an alien, simply because he was such, often had scant justice at the hands of a jury of which the members had a national antipathy to him, even if they were not interested particularly in his fall. An act of Henry VI. provided, that in all cases where an alien was on his defence he might elect to be tried by a mixed jury, half English, half aliens, at whose hands it was supposed he might expect a righteous verdict.

Richard III., hoping to conciliate the vulgar English mind, passed an act forbidding aliens to be handicraftsmen in England—to make any cloth within the realm, to retail their goods, and to have English servants; and this act, though ostensibly repealed by the usurper's supplanter, was expressly confirmed by Henry VIII., who also made restrictions as to the number of apprentices and journey-men that might be taken. In the twenty-first year

of his reign, he ratified a decree of the Star-Chamber forbidding aliens to keep more than two alien servants, requiring them to swear the oath of allegiance to the king, and forbidding them to set up new shops, or to assemble anywhere but in their common hall. Subsequently, he forbade alien handicraftsmen, who were not denizens, to receive a lease of land or premises; and this prohibition continued in force till the present reign, when it was permitted to friendly foreigners to have a lease for a period not exceeding twenty-one years.

Charles II. passed an act by which it was forbidden to aliens to be merchants or factors in the colonies, but it was soon suspended in favour of planters and others in the West India plantations, and subsequently in other places. George IV. wholly repealed it, his father having already repealed the 'petty customs' and other differential duties charged on goods supplied to foreigners.

The present condition of aliens resident in this country is one in which they are admitted to the same rights and privileges as natural-born subjects, with the following exceptions: they may not vote for members of parliament, or be themselves elected, neither can they, without a special act of parliament, sit at the privy-council board; they cannot sit on juries, except those sworn to try an alien, and then by the statute of Henry VI. the jury may consist of six Englishmen and six aliens. No alien may hold an English benefice without the licence of the sovereign, and by an old act of Richard II. it was made punishable, with severe penalties, for any one to send money arising from an English benefice to aliens out of the kingdom. Owing, it would seem, to an apprehension that if foreigners could once get a property in land here, they might be able, especially in war-time, to injure the sovereign or the people by making *points d'appui*, in which the aliens might strengthen themselves, it is forbidden to aliens to acquire lands. Henry VIII. refused them so much as a lease; but an act of Victoria allows them to have a lease for not more than twenty-one years. Aliens may buy lands, but cannot hold them; the lands, however, may be held in trust for them or their families as the sovereign may see fit. Foreigners have the same rights as British-born subjects in respect of copyright.

Of course, by the process of naturalisation a foreigner may get rid of almost all the disabilities mentioned above. It might be thought that he should be admitted to the full privileges of a Briton; but the old jealousy, which in this is not altogether unreasonable, precludes him from being either a member of parliament or a privy-councillor. James I. ordered that aliens wanting to be naturalised should first take the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the oaths of allegiance and supremacy. George IV. repealed this law, and his act, with all subsequent acts on the subject, was repealed by an act of Victoria, which is the existing law. Any one of the principal secretaries of state is empowered on petition, and after due inquiry made, to grant a certificate, which must be enrolled in the Chancery, and by which an alien, on taking the oath of allegiance to her Majesty, is admitted to all the rights of a British subject, excepting in respect of the legislature and the privy-council. His children, however, will be free even from these disabilities. By this act it was also justly conceded that the child of a British woman and an alien, not naturalised, should be able to take any property, real or

personal, by inheritance, in the same way as if his father had been an Englishman. In other words, a British woman is not made to lose her natural rights because she marries a foreigner.

ONE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER XV.—GEORGE AND EVELYN.

AMONG the many things that we are prone to regret when the piled-up years have bent our backs, is the missed summer mornings; the thousand hours we have passed in vacant sleep, when the world has arrayed itself in its very best to ravish ear and eye, and both have slept. In our own wintry time, we often strive to repair this omission, and rise betimes, and take our walks abroad; the woods are waving welcome to the morn, the birds are calling to each other sweet good-morrows, the brooks are carolling in the sun a livelier tune than that they sang to soothe the weary night, but all the music has a plaintive sorrow in it, and whispers of a loss. It is to youth alone that it brings unmixed joy. If ever there is a guileless time on earth, it is the early morning. The devil is a late riser. Far into the midnight, his wicked rule extends, but surely for a few hours after sunrise there is an interregnum, when human passions are cooled, and the heart is grateful. Few of us get up early in the morning to follow strong drinks, or any other evil device. There is nothing very bad to be done. Nature, in her million-times renewed yet freshest garb demands a reverence that is more willingly paid to her than at any other time. Foul words seem as out of place as in the hearing of a little child. Good angels are beckoning to us from earth and sky, and we mortals are not wholly unaware of their presence; they may all have fled by noon with weeping eyes, but they will be there again to-morrow and to-morrow. Man is very steadfast in resisting such virtuous importunity, but now and then he yields himself to it. At all events, it is well to put one's self in the way of such temptation. The best folks I have known—with one or two base exceptions, fellows who have got up with the lark to make money for their private purse—have all been early risers; and this is especially the case with children. A child who gets up voluntarily to greet the morning out of doors, has a wise and healthy mind, and happy is the house that holds her.

All the summer through, it was Evy Sefton's habit to arise betimes, without assistance in her simple toilet, and let herself out of the still sleeping house, to work in her little garden, or stray beside the shining lake, or even visit the peaceful solitudes of the hills which had been dead Charlie's favourite haunts. She was growing now to be almost as old as he was in those far-back times: how strange that seemed! But there was nothing sad about such visits. She knew that he was in a place more beautiful by far than any of these. Refreshed and joyous, she would presently trip homeward; and her lithe and active step would be heard upon the stairs, and perhaps the beginning of some artless song, suddenly hushed as she passed Aunt Woodford's chamber-door, who, above all things, was not to be disturbed. Mr Woodford had been exiled from his wife's bower months ago, because his Indian habits led him to arise, not early indeed, but considerably before the breakfast-hour most agreeable to Madame,

and pronounced by Dr Warton, under existing circumstances, to be the most healthful. But Uncle Ernest immured himself forthwith in what he called his study, and set to work to calculate the future incomings from his wad-mine, which was turning out quite a Goleonda: his growing wealth was beginning to give him, for a certain reason, more pleasure than it had ever done before.

On the morning after her last visit to André Nook, Evy leaves as usual the silent Hall, with its drawn-down blinds, and takes her way to the lake-side. Early as she is, she is late for the object she has in view, which is to speak with George Adams ere he has crossed the mere on his road to the wad-mine. He lodges in a lonely house half-way up a green hill, itself at some distance from the village, and the nearest point to the Hall that he will touch at is the wooden foot-bridge. The ordinary way thither is by the carriage-drive and the high-road; but since there has been much dry weather, and the lake is low, Evy is able to skirt it dry-shod, upon the soft brown sand and loose tinkling shingle, between the water and the fringing woods. To this new-discovered land flock the birds, to drink and twitter, and the gorgeous butterflies to flit from one sunny stone to another like winged jewels. And now the mere begins to narrow, and the still waters to move swiftly in their bed; here a huge stone lifts its head above the stream, and riven-breasted though it be, still foils the churning wave. Here a tiny islet parts it without contest; and here, again, the level beck clangs on exultant over the unresisting pebbles. Beneath the shadow of these midmost rocks, and where the eddies leave a calm, still pool, sways, waiting for her love, the scarlet char. So much there is to mark, and all so fair, that Evy comes upon the quivering shadow of the bridge, and on it that of the very man she seeks, before she is aware.

'Dear heart, Miss Evelyn, but you are an early bird!' exclaims George, with the old military salute. 'You need not tell me who shewed you that pathway by the beck, for there was only one who knew it.'

'Yes, George; it was Cousin Charlie.'

They always spoke of him, those two, whenever they met: his memory, sacred to the one, had become, through reverent usage, and consciousness of the favour which had been done him for its sake, in some sort hallowed to the other.

'I am glad I met you, Miss Evelyn; I have been very busy at the mine lately, which is turning out grandly. It gave me such pleasure to find it so, when I felt that, at some time or other, it would all be yours; but now'—

He stopped and hesitated, for he read in the child's wondering eyes that she understood nothing of what he meant; that either she had never given a thought to the fact that she was her uncle's heir (that is, to what he had of his own to leave her; the estate, except the machine, a comparatively recent purchase, being entailed), or else that she was unconscious of the change that was impending at Dewbank Hall.

'But now I was going to say, miss,' stammered George, 'since Mrs Murphy has a son, there is no knowing who will have the property. Well, I have been so busy of late that I could not find any time to come up to the Hall to give you this, but have carried it about in my jacket, hoping to find some opportunity such as the present. There's

nothing valuable about it, Miss Evelyn; but that I knew was of no consequence in your eyes—it's the *will* as you would look to: a mere packet of pencils for your own drawing; but the lead is out of your uncle's mine—I asked the manager for it myself, for they are getting awful particular about the wad, just as though it was gold—and it's as good as any as is found in Borrowdale, whatever the Keswick folk may say.

'Oh, thank you, George: this is most kind.'—It took a very little favour to tinge Evy's delicate cheek, and soften her blue eyes.—'And you have even taken the trouble to cut them for me, which is a greater benefit than you may guess, perhaps, for I am so clumsy!'

'Well, Miss Evelyn, I shouldn't have thought that, I'm sure. But the truth is, they're cut with Master Charlie's knife, as he gave to me the day before he went away, for ever, and I thought you'd like them all the better so.—Don't ye cry, miss—don't ye cry. I know how dearly he loved you, and how he used to call you his little wife! But he might have done worse than die—he might have forgot you!'

'Never, never!' returned Evelyn sadly, shaking her shining curls. 'Charlie would never have done that: you didn't know him, George, as I did.'

It was strange to see those two, the one a grown-up toiler with his hands, the other a well-nurtured child, so different in all external circumstances, yet so near allied in what was deepest at their hearts: they had lost the being worshipped most on earth—the one by Death, the other by Change.

The child laid her small hand upon the man's rough sleeve. 'I know what you are thinking of, George. It was about *her* that I came here to meet you. I saw Mary'—it was on the tip of her tongue to add, as usual, 'Ripson;' but with delicate intuition, she forbore to do so—'yesterday morning at the Nook.'

'How was she, Miss Evelyn? How was she looking? They say there is cause for her not being'—

'She is not well,' returned the child as the other paused. Matters of a delicate nature were treated without much reserve in Sandalwaite society; and the reticence he felt to be necessary in the present case was somewhat embarrassing. 'She is looking very ill. I think, if you have not seen her lately, you would scarcely know her, George.'

'I should know her, Miss Evelyn, half a century hence, though I had never seen her between this and then. I should know her, though her glossy hair had turned from black to white, and her bright eyes were dim, or closed by death itself. I shall know her when she stands among the Heavenly Host, as though she were the only creature with her sins forgiven who stood beside God's throne.' He stood with both hands upon the rail of the slender bridge, and his eyes looking into the blue vault above him, as though she were already where he pictured her.

'Dear George, she gave me a message for you: it isn't much to say; but if you had seen the look with which she gave it—so sorrowful, so pitiful, so kind'—

'Don't, don't, Miss Evy,' returned the other appealingly; 'I can't bear it. Only tell me what she said.'

'She asked me how you looked, George—just as you asked me about her just now—whether you were well and happy.'

'Happy!' cried the young man with bitterness. 'Great Heaven! did she ask you that about me?'

'Don't be hard upon her, George. I used to be that myself, knowing how she has behaved to you. I never gave her so much as a kind look till yesterday. But, O George, I am sure her husband is not'—

'Be quiet, child!'—Sharp and sudden as the cut of a knife, George spoke.—'Never speak of that man to me.' Then changing his tone to one of tender kindness, he added: 'Forgive me, Miss Evy; I have frightened you, I fear.'

'You have, a little, George,' replied the child, in firm, grave tones—'though not at all on my own account. I am sure you would never hurt me.'

'I hope not indeed, Miss Evy. I would die for you—that is,' added he sadly, 'if death were a thing to be dreaded. Forgive me my passionate words.—What did you tell Mary about me?'

'I told the truth, George. And if you had seen her face when I said: "No, he is not happy," you would have pitied her as I did. "Alas, alas!" she answered, "it is hard that God should punish us both for the fault of one."—He has made her suffer much, George—a righteous punishment, of course—but you would almost forgive her, if you could but see her.'

'I do forgive her,' answered the young man huskily. 'I pray God forgive her. Poor girl, poor girl!—You have something more to say, Miss Evy?'

'No, nothing more,' hesitated the child.—'or at least nothing more that I was told to say. It may be wrong to mention what I had in my mind to tell you.'

'Nothing that you can have in *your* mind can be wrong to speak, Miss Evy,' returned the young man simply. 'When I listen to you, I seem to hear an angel talking.'

'Hush, George, hush; that is a very foolish thought. I am very wicked at times—wickedder than you can possibly imagine.'

George smiled. 'Well, when you are at your worst, your very wickedest, Miss Evy, I should like to change places with you, and so remain for the rest of my life. Then I should have angel's wings growing upon me in time, as I am sure you must have. At present, there is not a feather.—Now, what was this that you have doubts about saying to me? I dare be sworn it is as good as most hymns.'

'Well, George, I have told you how set I have always been against Mary, upon your account: now, yesterday, for the first time, I felt quite different towards her. I have no proof to give, not even her assertion; she has never tried to defend herself in any way; but something in her face and tone made me feel certain—and I feel as certain now—that there has been some sad mistake between you.'

George shook his head. 'Of course, the mischief has been done, I know,' she continued. 'But still, if I could convince you, as clearly as I feel convinced myself, that Mary is not so much to blame as you imagine—that she is not so false as you have deemed her—would it not be a comfort, even though you have lost her, George? Mind, I am sure of what I say, quite sure.—Don't, don't cry. I can't bear to see a man cry, George; the only time that I ever saw Charlie cry, it was when he was going away, and the very last time'—

'Hush, hush, Miss Evy! What a selfish brute I am to behave in this way! I am weak as any child—weak as yourself, where my poor lost Mary—for she is mine still in my prayers—is concerned. But there; it's over now. Yes, dear Miss Evelyn, it would be a great comfort, an unspeakable comfort, one way, although the bitterest thought I could have in another, if I could persuade myself, like you, that there has been some—some dreadful misunderstanding, and that Mary never meant— But then, how can that be, when I sent her so many, many letters, wrote her my whole heart, Miss Evy, so that she should read every beat of it—and she never answered one?'

'That is beyond me to explain, George. But you know sometimes quite a foolish person—such as a child like me—comes upon something true, which has escaped wiser heads. There are some words about that even in the Bible. And not only am I sure that Mary has not behaved altogether so ill as you may think, but, in some way or other, I see that she believes that it is you who have been to blame—not that she is angry with you; she is far indeed from that. But although, as I have heard, she never speaks upon the matter to any one, and did not speak upon it to me, yet, when she said, "the fault of one," I am positive, by her manner, that she was not thinking of herself.'

George Adams stood leaning upon the bridge-rail in deep thought, which the child did not attempt to interrupt, but after a while he answered: 'It may be as you say, Miss Evy, although I do not see how it can be. Heaven only knows. But if it be so, if Mary thinks I am anyway to blame, I do not wish her undeceived. With me, it is very different; the memory of my love is all that is left to me. I wish to think the very best of her, as though she were dead—just as you can think of Master Charlie. But she—who has already had so much to suffer, you say—would find her burden all the heavier, if—not knowing it now—she was to learn that it need never have been borne. And besides, she has a—a husband. It may be difficult enough for her, poor soul! to pay him reverence, to do her duty as his wife: I would not, if I could, make her task harder. Tell her, Miss Evy, if she speaks of me again, that I am well, and—and—well to do. 'Tis the best thing I can say with truth to please her. Tell her that.'

So, with a long, kind hand-shake, George parted from his little friend, and trod with heavy step the narrow wooden bridge, and slowly wound the zig-zag of the hill, and at the summit turned to wave his hand to Evelyn, left in tears.

CHAPTER XVI.—THE EXPECTED STRANGER.

It is a wet evening, and dinner has long been over at Dewbank Hall; the dessert-plates and wine-glasses for three shew that that number of persons had partaken of the meal in question. Mrs Woodford has ceased for some time to leave her room, except for a few hours at mid-day; there must therefore have been a guest at table, although the Black Squire is now sitting all alone. It would not require much sagacity, to one acquainted with the family, to surmise correctly who that guest is. It is Dr Warton, who, having done ample justice to his host's viands, has intermitted his attentions to the wine, and gone up-stairs to look after his patient. He has been away some time, and Mr Woodford is getting impatient either for com-

panionship or news, for he mutters to himself, as is the way with the self-willed when made to wait, and frowns and bites his lips, as though there was something amiss in the universal fitness; but upon hearing a heavy step upon the stair, his features grew more composed, although still stern, as though the mistake in the Cosmogony was forgiven, but only upon the understanding that it did not occur again.

'Well, doctor, what is the bulletin? Are you to take a bed here to-night, or not? I hope so indeed. That infernal old woman not having come from Keswick, makes me very nervous. If five thousand a year passes into that painter fellow's hands through any want of help—through her confounded dilatoriness—I'll strangle her. I hate putting things off to the last moment in this way.'

'Don't worry yourself, my good friend,' returned the other, with professional coolness. 'It is certainly very remiss in Mrs Roberts; I have never known her play me such a trick before. There is not the least cause for apprehension, however, though I'll take a bed in the house to-night, if that will relieve your anxiety. You papas-expectant are always *such* fidgets—that is, upon the first occasion—you become very philosophic about it in time; and I have known one or two become so hardened at last as to forecast the coming event, and manage to have a business engagement during the interesting!'

'You told me all that, doctor, the very last time I spoke upon the subject,' interrupted Mr Woodford drily. 'It is curious to see how a profession can cramp and stultify even an intelligent man. You can't get out of talking your technical slip-slop, even when you are speaking to me, whose case you well know to be quite different from that of other husbands. I suppose, however, that nothing but Commerce is free from such conventional puerilities.'

'We can't be all merchant-princes, Mr Woodford.'

'That is very true,' assented the host, settling his shirt-collar with the air of having settled the question.—'Now, take a clean glass, and tackle this fresh bottle of claret.'

'No, Mr Woodford—no, I thank you. It is not that I am afraid of your good liquor—although it is of course expedient to keep my head clear upon the brink of such an important matter as that we have in hand—but the fact is, I have promised to look in at Ander Nook before night. Mrs Miles Ripson increased the population of Sandalwaite this morning by a little girl!'

'Ay, so I heard,' broke in the other with irritation. 'But it's going on well enough, is it not? Why should you leave us all alone here? I don't like it.'

'My dear sir, I can be with you in twenty minutes, if there is need to send; and any way, I shall not be gone an hour at furthest. The fact is, the child is very weak—very far from going on well; and I must keep my promise to the mother.'

'Umph!' growled the Black Squire. 'It seems a very strange thing that a case where there is next to no landed property—nay, worse, when it's a girl, and it can't matter—is to take precedence of one where— But there, if you must, you must—only be back as soon as you can.—How fast it rains, and how infernally dark it is getting! If it wasn't for that—I mean the darkness (not the wet, confound him), I'd send that lazy fellow

William over to Keswick, late as it is: but he shall take the gig at daylight. That woman shall be in the house to-morrow, or my name is not Ernest. —Now, mind, you don't be long.'

Mr Woodford once more seated himself at table, but after gulping a glass or two of wine as though it had been medicine, and enjoying it not much more, he took to walking impatiently up and down the room. Presently, there were muffled sounds above stairs, swift and stealthy footsteps, and whisperings. He hastily opened the door, and met one of the female servants face to face—an elderly person, as they all were, for Miss Selina, who didn't like young women, had chosen the household staff.

'Oh, please, sir,' said she anxiously, 'I think it would be better to send for Dr Warton.'

'Let William go to Ander Nook at once,' replied her master calmly: 'he will find the doctor there.'

'Shall he ride, sir?'

'No; run. He will go more quickly that way in a night so dark as this.'

Again Mr Woodford resumed his monotonous walk, more impatiently than ever, more like a wild animal in its cage, indeed, than a man, except that he did not run half-way up the dining-room wall, as an hyena would have done at the end of his promenade; but ever and anon he stopped to listen, and clenching his hand, would consign Mrs Roberts of Keswick to a climate even warmer than that which had deprived him of his liver. Half-an-hour—it seemed a whole night long—had passed in this way, when, with a muttered curse, he left the room, and began putting on his mackintosh, that hung up in the hall.

'O uncle,' said a gentle voice, 'where are you going to?'

'To Ander Nook, child, to fetch the doctor,' replied he roughly: 'your aunt is very ill.'

'Yes, uncle, I know, and I am so sorry; but Dr Warton is with her now. I saw him go up-stairs myself not five minutes ago.'

'Dr Warton here!' cried Mr Woodford; 'why, I have been listening for this hour for him. I never heard the bell ring.'

'He came in at the back-door, uncle, in order to save time, I suppose. I would have come and told you, only, I—I—I thought you mightn't like it.'

'Is that infernal woman from Keswick come?'

Evy shook her head. 'I know nothing about that, Uncle Ernest. Only there was a woman came with Dr Warton: she was very much muffled up, but I think it was old Mrs Ripson who keeps the post-office.'

'That's well, Evy,' said her uncle, chucking the child under the chin. 'You have more sense than all the women in this house put together, and the only one who ever tells me any good news.—You are very cold, child.'

'Am I, uncle? I think I am a little frightened. Everything seems so strange: there is nobody in the kitchen, and Martha said I am not, on any account, to go up-stairs.'

'Go into the dining-room, Evy; it's warm there.'

Mr Woodford himself sought his study, and wrote a few words on a piece of paper which he folded carefully up; then he went to the foot of the stairs, and called 'Martha, Martha!'

'Yes, sir,' replied a voice so immediately, that it was evident it came from the landing outside Mrs Woodford's room, where, indeed, more than one of the female domestics were keeping her company.

'Give this note to Dr Warton, at once—inmediately.'

'The door is locked, sir; nobody is to go in. Mrs Ripson is there, sir, with the doctor.'

'Knock at the door, and push the letter under,' replied her master imperiously: 'say it is for Dr Warton.'

'Yes, sir;' and the woman did as she was bid.

Mr Woodford returned to his study—a cold and cheerless place, where there was a solitary candle burning, but he felt he could not go where any one could observe him; the presence of a child even was not to be borne. This is the feeling with most of us in times of great anxiety and suspense; when the blow has fallen, companionship, sympathy, are welcome; but while it is suspended over us, we crave to be alone. The Black Squire sat with his head buried in his hands at the same table on which he had written that last cruel letter to his nephew, and where he had read the news of the boy's death. His remorse upon the former account, although poignant at the time, was already much blunted, and even his regret upon the latter was now perhaps about to be done away with. Upon the other hand, if his wife should present him with a daughter, and not a son, the gift would be, in his eyes, worse than valueless. Mr Woodford did not care for children for their own sake: Evy understood him, pleased him—he liked her, upon the whole, better than any other human being—but he did not want another girl in the house; besides which, it was very unlikely that any other would prove as tractable. Let us trust that Mr Woodford's hopes and fears were different from those which agitate most husbands upon similar occasions. His heart was not heavy with the thought of the pain and peril of the companion of his happiest hours, the solacer of his griefs, the sympathiser with his plans and projects. He did not see before him a vision of his future life, like a dark vista, through which one walks on and on *alone*, for ever, and which cannot be shut out from the gaze. His anxiety was considerable, but not so absorbing but that it admitted of calculation, of his forming schemes in case of various contingencies.

If a Boy was born, all would be well, and the brightest bit of colour in the radiant picture which that circumstance suggested to him was the communication of the event by letter to Mrs Murphy, in return for that triumphant epistle which she had penned to him not two years ago.

If a girl was born, this exquisite piece of retribution would have to be postponed indefinitely; although, at the same time, Selina would be seriously disquieted, for what had happened once might happen again, and with a change of sex. There was really no excuse now—whatever there might have been during the period of their separation—for his wishing that his wife was—well, not dead: nobody but a downright ruffian ever ventures to say to himself so much as that—let us say, in Heaven. There was no reason, I say, *now*, for his desiring her removal from this wicked and troublesome world; but still, if things up-stairs were not going on as they ought to do; if 'anything was to happen' to Mrs Woodford (for that was the delicate phrase in which his mind suggested the calamity), why, then, he was a free man, and might 'contract a new alliance.'

Mr Woodford reviewed these various possibilities very methodically, and looked them each steadily in the face as he sat at his desk; but while he was

engaged upon the very last of them, picturing himself in the matrimonial market for the second time, with a placard with L.100,000 upon it, hung round his neck, and half the young ladies in Great Britain eager to hang there (one at a time) also, he suddenly sprang to his feet, with his face quite white, and listened. Yes; he was right. He had heard an infant's wail; again and again it broke forth; not a smothered cry, by any means, but a healthy protest against some ill which baby-flesh is heir to, and almost loud enough to suggest a mis-directed pin.

Then once more silence; and then the doctor's voice at Mrs Woodford's door giving orders to some domestic. The woman actually brushed with her petticoats the study threshold on her way to the kitchen, and yet Mr Woodford did not dare step out and ask her: 'Is it boy or girl?' although he well knew she possessed that priceless knowledge. Bad as is suspense, still worse, for the moment, is the news of disaster, just as the dentist's wrench is worse, while it lasts, than the long agony of tooth-ache. A quarter of an hour more of dread uncertainty, and then the doctor's voice again, its deep notes, though hushed, contrasting strongly with the whispered gossip of the servant-maids. 'Your mistress is not to be disturbed; let no one enter the room on any account. Mrs Ripson will ring for what she wants.—Where is your master?' Then the heavy step descending the stairs, and the firm fingers upon the handle of the door, and the large face with a cheerful smile upon it, which told his errand before his lips could speak. 'It is a Boy, Mr Woodford. Mother and child are both nicely. I wish you joy of your son and heir.'

'Thank you, Warton—thank you.' Perhaps Mr Woodford did not wish to let the doctor see how deeply he was moved, not to tears indeed, but to triumph—for he turned away even while he took the other's proffered hand, and began to write in his cheque-book. 'Here is something better than thanks,' said he ungraciously. 'Here is your hundred guineas, although, upon my life, I think I ought to make it pounds, on account of that woman Roberts, about whose coming you were so sure.'

'You owe something, I can tell you, to the woman who *did* come,' replied the doctor gravely. 'Mrs Ripson's own poor little grand-daughter, born but yesterday, is lying dead at Ander Nook; but hearing Mrs Woodford had no nurse, the old woman came hither, saying, that now she could be of no more service at the farm, she would help us in our strait.'

'What! do babies die so suddenly as that?' cried Mr Woodford selfishly. 'Dear me, dear me.—What shall I give the woman?'

'Listen!' said the doctor smiling, as another sturdy cry broke forth from the new arrival—

'For though to the ear that's nothing more
Than an infant's squall, it is really the roar
Of a fifty-thousand pounder;

If Selina's son could know what she's done,
It would make him cry: "Confound her!"

You must give the old lady a ten-pound note.'

'I suppose I must,' returned Mr Woodford reluctantly. 'What an expensive luxury a boy is!'

'It will cost somebody else more than it will you, however,' observed the doctor chuckling.—'And now, I daresay you would like to see your wife.'

'Thank you,' said Mr Woodford drily—'she's pretty well, isn't she? Besides, I am not one of

your sentimental folks, to run the risk of making a person ill, or "throwing her back," as you call it, just for the sake of relieving one's feelings. I can always put a check on *them*. But I think I should rather like to see the—the boy.'

Dr Warton started; so strange to him such a desire seemed in such a man, but preceded, without remark, his host up-stairs. He knocked softly at the door of a dressing-room that communicated with Mrs Woodford's chamber, and from which the cries of the infant were still proceeding. 'Come in at once—don't let there be a draft for a moment, Mr Woodford.' The two entered the room. A shapeless little creature, very purple at the extremities, was being slowly swathed in fine linen upon the lap of old Mrs Ripson.

'Don't rise,' said the master of the house.

'Lor bless ye, I worn't a-going to it,' replied the old lady. 'I know my dooty too well.—It's a fine child, sir, and the very pictur of its father. Its little head's as black as your hat already, you see.' And certainly the son and heir of the Black Squire was a very dark child indeed.

MY SECOND YEAR'S HOLIDAY.

THIRD ARTICLE.

TUESDAY, July 30.—As previously arranged, the *Pharos* got up steam at seven o'clock, at which early hour we bade good-bye to Lerwick, while the thin blue smoke of the peat-fires from the chimneys of the irregularly-built town ascended in the morning air. Our way was southward down Bressay Sound, keeping so near to the mainland as to take the narrow channel between it and the island of Mousa. Without going out of our course, I was anxious on my own part as well as on that of others to see the tower of Mousa, ordinarily called Burgh-Mousa, about which there has been no little discussion among antiquaries.

Without being much of an archæologist, I may presume to say that the Shetland group of islands does not exhibit any memorials referrible to a very remote historical period—at least, none of any moment. Its antiquities are principally mediæval, or dating from probably the seventh or eighth century, when the natives were exposed to the harassing predatory incursions of the Norsemen, by whom, under Harold Harfagre, they, along with the inhabitants of Orkney, were finally subdued in the year 875. The old towers scattered about Shetland and the north of Scotland, which are usually spoken of as having been built by the Picts, are all similar in character, and peculiar in construction. We had a glance at the remains of one of them situated on an island in a loch near Lerwick, and now we were to see another which, by means of recent repairs, is singularly complete, and certainly so interesting as to be worthy of deliberate inspection.

In going southward down the channel, which is about a mile wide, the tower of Mousa made its appearance on our left, and stopping the vessel for a few minutes, a boat-load of us went ashore to pay it a visit. It occupies a knoll close upon the rocky sea-beach, from which materials for its

construction had been taken. The whole fabric is composed of flat slabs of clay slate, which have been easily piled together in a compact mass without the aid of mortar. In exterior figure, the tower is round, inclining inwards about half-way up, and then bulging out near the top. At the foundation, its diameter is nearly forty feet, and it measures about the same in height. On the side next the sea, there is a doorway, and that is the only exterior aperture. If there were ever any door-posts, they have disappeared; it is feebly conjectured, however, that instead of employing a door, the inmates had, on emergencies, built up the opening, for which there is an abundance of loose materials at hand. Entering the doorway, we find the wall sixteen feet thick, and looking upwards, feel as if we were at the bottom of a well, for the circular interior has no flooring, and the top is open to the sky. Opposite the doorway, there is an entrance to a passage and stair, which wind upwards, within the thickness of the wall, to the summit of the building. At different places, there are recesses, or galleries, leading off from the stair, lighted by apertures to the interior; such dismal holes being all that we find in the way of apartments. It is customary to speak of an outer and inner wall; but the two walls, if we so distinguish them, are so firmly bound together by the stair and otherwise, as to afford a united resistance to assault. Obviously, the structure was used as a retreat in case of attack from foreign enemies, against whom missiles could be showered down from the species of battlement formed by the top of the well-knit walls. The Society of Scottish Antiquaries deserves thanks for having repaired this fine memorial of a state of society a thousand years ago in Shetland. In sailing away, we see the fragment of a similar building on the coast of the mainland immediately opposite.

Holding on southward, we, in little more than an hour, reach Sumburgh Head, when we may be said to be amidst the scenery so faithfully described in the *Pirate*; and viewing it as classic ground, I may be excused for going over it somewhat leisurely. Sir Walter Scott tells us that it was as a guest of the Commissioners of the Northern Light-houses that he visited Shetland, in their armed yacht, in the summer of 1814; and that, as the nature of the important business which occupied the Commissioners was connected with the amusement of visiting the leading objects of a traveller's curiosity, he was enabled to store up recollections, and to hear of circumstances, out of which he afterwards constructed his fictitious narrative. Here were we, successors of these Commissioners, engaged in a similar duty, and going over the same ground, but with the superior advantage of being in a steamer, which, threading its way into voes, could set us down with the precision of a carriage driving up to a doorway.

At Sumburgh Head we were in the Roost or tide-flow noticed by the novelist for its impetuosity and danger to mariners. On the present occasion, the sea was calmer than anything we had yet experienced, and rounding the cape, we steered into West Voe, and cast anchor opposite the low neck of land on which stands the ruin of Jarlshof. At this point, we went on shore to walk to the light-house, a distance of a mile and a half, over which there is a constant ascent. The day was fine, the first on which we had any sunshine, and the walk

was a relief from the confinement on shipboard. Jarlshof consists of the gables and other walls of what had been once a spacious dwelling with out-houses, possessing an outlook to the voe in front, and having some garden-ground behind. The whole was seen in a moment, and there was nothing to detain us from our walk, which was partly along a road to a farm establishment that lay on our line of route. Near to Jarlshof, the proprietor of Sumburgh is building a new mansion, which will command a view over the level sandy tract and the sea on each side of the peninsula which terminates in the bold cape on the south. In twos and threes, we are to be supposed as jogging on our way up the long grassy slope towards this prominent headland. At length, the light-house is reached, and then begins the climb to the top of the tower, whence we have a magnificent prospect of sea and land, rendered lively by the flight of numerous gulls and other birds which inhabit the crevices of the cliff beneath. From the top of Sumburgh light-house is seen in clear weather the light of North Ronaldshay, in Orkney, and, I believe, from few other points are the two groups of islands visible from each other. It is only by an actual visit that one learns how thoroughly the Shetland islands are disconnected with those of Orkney—the association being political, and nothing more—and also how the Shetlanders still speak of going to Scotland, as if it were to them a kind of foreign country. A young woman, with whom we conversed at Sumburgh Head, mentioned to us that 'she had never been in Scotland;' her furthest stretch southwards having been only as far as the Pentland Skerries, within sight of Caithness.

From the elevated spot we had reached, the scene was most picturesque towards the north-west, for in this direction we had the Bay of Quendal, bounded by Fitful Head; and more remotely, lying in solitary grandeur in the ocean between Shetland and Orkney, the lofty island of Foulah, which, above all things, we had been told to try to visit.

Loitering on the shore, under the ruins of Jarlshof, until all the party return from their official inspection, a conversation takes place on things in general and the future proceedings for the day in particular.

'The commodore had better let us hear his mind as to the route,' says one. 'I would like to know what he thinks about Foulah,' says another, evidently trusting in the efficacy of the hint.

'Well, gentlemen,' I reply, with the gravity suitable to my high function, 'this is a serious matter, and I have been thinking over it for some time. I will give you my view of the affair. In the first place, we have finished off the Shetland light-houses, and our next move is to Orkney. On consulting the printed programme in your pockets, you will observe that our anchorage for the night is to be Otterswick Bay, in the island of Sanday. In point of fact, we could not do better. If we reach Otterswick by eight o'clock in the evening, we shall do excellently, for the sea is now so calm that it will make no sort of difference whether we dine while sailing or at anchor. Now, having a long day still before us, why not bend a little northward to have a look at the western shores of Shetland, where there are as yet no light-houses? I understand there has been some official correspondence as to the propriety of establishing one on the Vie Skerries, near Papa Stour, and also one somewhere about Skelda Ness, bearing north-west

on the Bay of Scalloway. I say, therefore, why not, when we are thus far, take a look in that direction? Our doing so may be useful to the service. Whether we can touch at Foulah, will depend on tides and other circumstances, of which the captain will be the best judge. If we can do so conveniently, I have no objections. And I may add, as perhaps not a bad reason for calling at the island, that the steward hints he is getting short of eggs and poultry, and at a small cost a good stock may be laid in.' This line of argument was complimented for its perspicacity. I was told that I had exhausted the subject. There was not another word to be said.

There was a disposition to be off, but a number had not yet arrived. The Secretary, who has much to do in making up notes on such occasions, was still absent; and so was one of our guests, Mr Marwick, City Clerk of Edinburgh, who, with the aid of an apparatus fixed to the top of a tall tripod, was taking a photograph of Erick's Steps, the cleft in the rock by which, the novelist informs us, the inhabitants of Jarlshof were wont for any purpose to seek access to the foot of the precipice beneath the headland. At last all have reached the attending boat, except Milo, which has for an hour been chasing rabbits among the sand-heaps, and seems unwilling to abandon his sport. The mate is despatched on a mission to get hold of him; and ultimately, after a good deal of whistling and scolding, he is persuaded to return from his scamper. Getting him securely into the boat, where he modestly settles down under the cross-benches of the oarsmen, we shove off from the interesting locality, and in a few minutes we are again placed on the deck of the *Pharos*.

The captain, with whom I had immediate conference, declared that, as regards tide and everything else, it would be quite practicable to touch at Foulah. 'Let us, however,' said I, 'stretch the compasses across the chart, and measuring the distance, calculate when we shall reach our anchorage at Otterswick.' This was a simple matter. It was seen that, after giving an hour to Foulah, we could be at Otterswick about eight in the evening, the hour on which I had speculated.

The vessel, thereupon, is steered in a north-westerly course, to bring us in front of Fitful Head, which rises in a slope so much more abrupt from the water-edge than the angle of repose, that its friable strata are to all appearance constantly sliding down into the sea in a state of disintegration. With eyes turned towards this renowned headland, we with some interest observe a number of boats out on a cruise for white-fish. For a minute, the vessel stops in its career, and the waste steam hissing off is a sufficient signal for such boatmen to approach as have anything to dispose of. Right and left, what a competition to be first in reaching this unexpected market! The boat that gains the race is manned by three roughly-clad fishermen, who, on being asked what newly-caught fish they had, hold up three large tusk, which the cook and his assistant instantly clutch by the gills, and, in return, to complete the bargain, the steward tosses half-a-crown, which is received with a grin of perfect satisfaction. Again, we are on our appointed course—the three fish, destined to figure in successive menus, being for some time objects of interest in a culinary, if not natural history point of view, lying in a tub at the entrance to the cook's galley. All the boats, of which we had just seen a

specimen, are here, as elsewhere in Shetland, on the old Norwegian model. They are light, shallow, and pointed at each end, ready for being turned in any direction by a dexterous handling of the oars. Eminently adapted to the wants of a people of small means and simple habits, they fall far short of what is required for deep-sea fishing on the scale demanded by enlarged modern requirements; and unfortunately, there is scarcely a season in which some of these small boats are not lost with all their crews.

Fitful Head is passed, and holding out to sea, we watch the gradual development of Foulah, as it emerges from the distant haze, massive and solitary on the face of the deep. Its distance is about thirty-five miles north-west of Sumburgh Head, and eighteen miles directly west of the parish of Walls, to which it is considered to belong. Whatever be the theory as to its ecclesiastical and civil status, Foulah is practically a thing by itself, and out of the way of general traffic, as little is known about it, as if it were an island in the Southern Pacific. Unknown to the world, the world is unknown to it; at all events, its thread of connection with the ongoings of society is so slender as to be hardly recognisable. There was not one on board who had ever landed on Foulah, or seen it nearer than at a distance of thirty miles. The curiosity was, on all hands, correspondingly great to see what it was like. On approaching it, we almost felt ourselves rising into the character of discoverers.

It is a blessing to mariners, that go where they will among the British islands, they are provided with a faithful guide in the numerous charts issued by the Admiralty. On these, the result of careful hydrographic survey, the soundings are marked in figures, and sunk rocks and strong tidal currents are also plainly indicated. The *Pharos*, as may be supposed, is provided with a full assortment of these valuable charts, one of which, appropriate to the sea that is traversed, is always at hand on the gangway, to be readily appealed to by the captain or mate in charge. Examining the chart on the present occasion, there was an assurance of deep water all round Foulah, except at the Have de Grind Rocks, which lie about three miles to the east, and shew their presence by boiling surges that are observable at a considerable distance. But these dangerous reefs were not in our course. Steering right up to the island, on its southern side, the vessel was not stopped till within half a mile of the shore.

At this point, we had a capital view of the island, which, from a low rocky shore, swelled gracefully upwards to some enclosed arable land, whence the ground ascended rapidly to a considerable height. Such is the southern aspect of Foulah; but, as we afterwards found, the appearance is very different on the west and north, where the single mountain of which it may be said to be composed is worn away to a bold and magnificent precipice. The sudden apparition of a large steamer seemed to spread a degree of consternation among the inhabitants. We could see the women making off from their scattered dwellings to the higher grounds, where they stood in groups watching our proceedings. The men were more courageous, yet they looked as if they were not quite sure of us, and perhaps, as occurred elsewhere not long ago in a part of Shetland, associated us with terror-striking traditions of 'the press-gang.' A boat being

lowered, our party proceeded to the shore, and effected a landing at some broken masses of rock, up which we scrambled to dry land, holding out presents of newspapers to the natives, and beckoning on them to come forward. In this, however, they manifested great reluctance. One or two men shyly accepted our gifts; but nothing at first could induce the females to approach, and some of them positively fled to a greater distance. We saw no children, and on inquiry, learned that they had been hidden in the holes and corners of the dwellings.

The sheriff of Wigtonshire, with a handful of newspapers, and using many earnest as well as kindly solicitations, was the first to be successful in quelling the female panic. The women, in small parties, ventured to come near us, and learned that we merely wanted to see the island, and to know how the people lived. Confidence being thus established, we proceeded to make an inspection of several clusters of dwellings and the small patches of cultured ground in their vicinity. In our walk thither, we could not but view with sorrow the process of scarifying the pastoral part of the land, in order to carry away the turf for fuel, and also for material to enrich the scraps of ground under crops of bear, oats, and potatoes. To such an extent is this ruinous practice carried, that much of the grassy slope facing the sea is reduced to the condition of a stony waste; and what the inhabitants are to do when all the superficial layer of turf is gone, is more than I can tell, unless it be to suffer downright starvation.

Any one who has seen the hovels occupied by the poorer inhabitants of Skye and other western islands, can have no difficulty in understanding the domestic architecture of Foulah—lowly thatched biggings with a peat-fire in the middle of the clay-floor, from which the smoke, after hanging about the dingy interior, escapes through a hole in the roof. The first dwelling we entered had a cow-house as a sort of side-apartment, and in a lesser den in the passage from the door we found two calves. As there was a pig-house outside, we concluded that the establishment was of a somewhat high order. The live-stock in the other dwellings was, as far as we could see, less extensive. As a kind of excuse for our intrusion, we made some inquiry as to poultry, and hinted that eggs might find a good customer; but there was evidently a scarcity of anything saleable. All the provisions which the steward could forage were a couple of hens, purchased from an old crone at the moderate price of eighteenpence.

We could recognise no difference in the dress of the islanders from what we are accustomed to in the Hebrides, except in two particulars. The women have handkerchiefs or small shawls thrown over the head, and tied loosely under the chin; and both men and women wear a species of sandals called 'rivelins' instead of shoes. I had seen the humbler class of women at Lerwick with the same kind of foot-covering. The sandals are pieces of hide secured by strings drawn together, after the picturesque fashion of the peasantry of the Abruzzi, such as Italian artists have a fancy for delineating. To render the tread soft, straw or wool is introduced below the foot; and some artifice of that kind would, I think, be required in walking with skin-sandals over the rough, scarified land of Foulah. All, as in other parts of Shetland, speak English, which has long superseded the Norse. As for

Gaelic, nothing of it is known in the Orkney or Shetland group of islands, in which there is no evidence of a Celtic ancestry. We have, in these islands, got beyond Gaelic, and are amidst the descendants of a Scandinavian people, whose connection with the Scottish crown dates only from 1470.

We saw two slated houses in Foulah, which we were told were chapels, one of them being in connection with the Established Church, and the other maintained by the Congregational Union of Scotland. Except for this Congregational chapel, and the missionary who is deputed as its minister, the island would be poorly off for religious ordinances. According to the Statistical Account of 1798, the parish incumbent was able to visit Foulah only once a year; and the same thing is said in the Account of 1841, with the further remark, that on these annual visits, 'the minister remains in the island two Sabbaths, preaching frequently during the interval.' By a school beneficently planted in the island by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, the children are taught the elementary branches of education.

Measuring three miles in length by one and a half in breadth, Foulah is occupied by about two hundred and fifty inhabitants. Depending for subsistence on the catching of fish and the farming of a few acres of land, and dwelling in huts such as I have noticed, their condition, as a stranger might think, is by no means enviable. I am told, however, that they do not experience any serious discomfort. All the families have sheep and cattle more or less in number, and several have saved money, which is placed out at interest. In the social condition of these people, there is not a little to command respect. Using no intoxicating drink, and free from other causes of demoralisation, they are sober, contented, and virtuous. They give trouble to no magistrate, and a breach of the law, I might say an indiscretion, is scarcely known in this simple community. Thinking of all this, one is half inclined to recall a wish to see the islanders in the hands of an emigration agent, to be settled in a country possessing doubtless unbounded material advantages, but associated with innumerable temptations and responsibilities. Lately several young men have emigrated, and the population is not increasing.

Foulah, of course, is owned by a proprietor, who draws rents from his tenantry, and is charged with the obligations of a landlord. The annual rental drawn by him is, I believe, £110, paid to a factor who negotiates the purchase of fish from the tenants. Under the auspices of the factor, a store for the sale of articles is established at a hamlet situated on the shore, about a mile east from where we landed. At this store there is always a good supply of oatmeal, flour, tea, sugar, tobacco, and other articles, which, in the absence of money-circulation, are given in barter for fish, hosiery, and eggs. A room is reserved at the store to be let to any casual stranger, and that is the only semblance of an inn in Foulah. There is no regular communication with the island. The ordinary method of reaching it is by fishing-boats from Walls or Reawick, on the mainland of Shetland. As regards posts, it is further from London than New Zealand. A letter posted in Edinburgh last October did not reach its destination at Foulah till the succeeding March.

An intercourse of an hour with the inhabitants was so effectual in rubbing off their shyness, that a

crowd followed us from the scattered clachan we had been visiting to the boat; and one of their own shallops, rowed by four men, with a boy, a barefooted urchin, in the stern, followed us as a friendly convoy to the ship. They said they had never before seen a steam-vessel, except at a great distance, and did not very well know how it was propelled against wind and tide. To satisfy their curiosity, we invited them on board; and three of them, with the boy, leaping to the deck, were shewn the wonders of the engine-room and cabins. Conducted to the saloon, they were struck with admiration of its furniture, but, above all, the large mirror, over the marble chimney-piece, filled them with profound astonishment. As a treat to the boy—something, perhaps, for him to remember all his days—he was held up to see himself in the glass; this culminating point in the grotesque scene being provocative of no small degree of merriment. With his pockets stuffed with biscuits, and his hands filled with pictorial newspapers, the little fellow was allowed to escape. Getting into their boat, and respectfully bidding us good-bye, the adventurous party returned to the island to tell of all they had witnessed, and we were left to proceed on our voyage.

To the geologist and lover of picturesque scenery, a sight of Foulah would be valueless if its western or more precipitous side were left unvisited. To this side we proceeded, and there, to be sure, a spectacle of marvellous grandeur presented itself. A precipice of red sandstone, disposed in finely curving layers, rose in front of us, as steep as a wall, to a height, at the loftiest part, of nearly twelve hundred feet, and stretched in varying configuration, for the space of a mile, along the sea-margin. In comparison to this, Noss Head, Sumburgh Head, and Barra Head—all grand and imposing—sink into inferiority. The cliffs of Foulah have no match in the British Islands, unless it be by those of St Kilda. It would have enhanced the scene, had the long swelling waves rolled in from the Atlantic in the fury which they frequently demonstrate on this wild coast; but, on the other hand, we had reason to congratulate ourselves on a state of the weather which permitted us to relish the spectacle without any unpleasant drawback. As at the other headlands just mentioned, numerous sea-birds build their nests on the cliffs of Foulah. The catching of these animals for the sake of their feathers formed a leading pursuit, which has latterly been abandoned. Eagles also take up their quarters on the cliffs, and would commit serious havoc on the live-stock of the islanders but for the Skua Gull, or Bounxie, as it is called by the islanders—the *Lestris cataractæ*, I presume. These gulls, with powerful beak and indomitable courage, attack the eagles, and keep their numbers within bounds. Of these gulls, which may be said to act as a police among the feathered tribes, there are only thirteen pairs on Foulah, which is the only place where they build their nests, and are now to be found. The proprietor pays one of the islanders to attend to these valuable birds, and to prevent any one shooting or destroying them.

Having seen these sublime cliffs, there was nothing further to detain us. The head of the *Pharos* was turned in a south-westerly direction towards the shores of Orkney; and after a straight run, during which no vessel hove in sight, we got safely to our anchorage in Otterswick Bay while it was still good daylight.

W. C.

THE KNIGHT AND THE LADY.

THE KNIGHT.

I was a brawny Knight:
I had no fear of men;
I slew once without arms in fight
A lion in his den,
Far off in the bright Holy Land,
Where 'twas a joy to be,
Where dreamy wastes of desert sand
Ran down to violet sea.

Where Christ his holy sermon gave,
I rode in strength and pride,
Near to the Galilean wave,
Upon the mountain-side.
Ah! little of his words we recked,
When all day by the sea
The battle rolled, and reeled, and shrieked,
And thundered hideously.

I lie now in this vaulted aisle,
My arms across my breast;
I hear the voice of hymns meanwhile,
And take my hard-earned rest,
Till God shall come with trumpet-sound
And all his saints to me,
And rocks be rent, and graves unbound—
How long is it to be!

THE LADY.

I was the Lady of the Knight
Ye make your moan about:
Of all his great joy and delight,
I was perforce shut out.
Tears only and terror were my dower,
Upon my lonely bed,
Without him in the midnight hour,
And worse than widowed.

Then, after many weary years
Of waiting in my bower,
I had such lack of comforters,
I took a paramour.
I had been with him, sad and loath,
A few and evil days,
When my lord found and slew us both,
To his great name and praise.

I lie now in the outer ground,
Here in the common dust;
At length a respite I have found,
Among the peasants thrast,
Till God shall come with all his flocks
Of saints in heaven to be,
And I shall call on hills and rocks
To fall and cover me.

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